



## FACT SHEET

### Module 2.1

### Myths and Facts about Seat Belts

***I buckle up most of the time, but not if I'm just going to the corner store a few blocks from my house.***

The risk of getting into a serious crash is just as great when you need to take a quick trip to the store as it is on a longer trip. We know that 75 percent of all serious motor vehicle crashes occur within 25 miles of a person's home and 80 percent of deaths and serious injuries occur in cars that are traveling under 40 miles per hour. Being thrown against a dashboard in a 30-mile-per-hour crash is like striking the ground after falling from a third-floor window. Even a crash at only 12 miles per hour can be fatal.

***I don't wear seat belts because I feel that I would be trapped in the car if it caught fire or if I were to drive in a body of water and become submerged.***

Less than one-half of one percent of crashes involves fire or submersion. Using safety belts prevents occupants from being knocked unconscious or into other passengers so that you can actually get out of the vehicle with the least amount of injury. Without a seat belt you are likely to be knocked out or too severely injured to leave the vehicle.

***I knew someone who died in a car crash because they were wearing their seat belt.***

If a person was killed in a car crash, it was not because they wore their seat belt, but most likely due to the devastating severity of the collision forces.

***I want to be thrown clear of my car to get out of harm's way in the event of a crash.***

Your chances of being killed are four times greater if you are thrown out of the vehicle. If you get ejected from the vehicle, you're more likely to be killed by the trip through the windshield, or by your collision with the ground 150 feet later, than by the initial collision with another vehicle or any other object. It is also true that occupants may be crushed by the rolling vehicle after they are thrown out. The best way to avoid harm is to buckle up and stay within the vehicle's safety cage.

***It's my personal choice to NOT wear a seat belt.***

True, we all have the right to make our own decisions when it comes to many things in life. However, it is a law in Montana for all occupants to wear a seat belt when in a moving vehicle. If you choose not to wear seat belt, you are, in fact, breaking the law. Either a primary or secondary seat belt law requires seat belt use for every trip.

Additionally, your personal choice could affect other occupants if you are in a crash and unbelted, because your unrestrained body might injure or kill them, even if they are wearing their seat belts.

***I don't need to wear a seat belt - my car has an airbag.***

Automotive engineers designed airbags to work with seat belts. And together they're 40 percent more effective at preventing injury than seat belts alone. Without a seat belt, an airbag smacks your chest hard as it inflates at a rate of up to 200 mph.

**Buckling up is the single MOST effective habit you can have to protect yourself in a crash.**

**Before you turn the key: Buckle up every time, every trip, everyone.**

**Be the one who walks away, along with family and friends riding with you.**

**MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU REMEMBER TO BUCKLE UP:**

Plan2Live Mythcrashers: <http://plan2live.mt.gov/mythcrashers.shtml>

Buckle Up Montana: <http://www.buckleup.mt.gov/>